

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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P 181335Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4757

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 NASSAU 1533

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR US BF

SUBJ: BASE NEGOTIATIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT DEPARTMENT AND DEFENSE ARE PREPARING INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEXT STAGE US-GCOB DISCUSSIONS ON BASE NEGOTIATIONS, PRESENTLY SCHEDULED GO FORWARD ON OCTOBER 24 PURSUANT TO AGREEMENT BETWEEN MINEXTAFF ADDERLEY AND AMBASSADOR SEPTEMBER 14 (NASSAU 1314). EMBASSY WILL OF COURSE WELCOME EARLIEST POSSIBLE GUIDANCE FOR THESE DISCUSSIONS NOW THAT TECHNICAL SURVEY HAS BEEN RECEIVED AND TRANSMITTED TO GCOB. IN THIS CONNECTION, HOWEVER, THIS MESSAGE SUBMITS SOME OVERALL THOUGHTS ON HOW WE PROCEED, RECOGNIZING THAT GIVEN COMPLETE NEWNESS OF ENTIRE EMBASSY TEAM THESE MUST BE REGARDED AS HIGHLY TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO REVISION AS WE GAIN EXPERIENCE. END SUMMARY

1. OUR BASIC ASSUMPTION IS THAT A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY OUTCOME TO CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WILL NOT BE TOO DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE. US FACILITIES HERE ARE NOT A POLITICAL ISSUE AS THEY ARE IN OTHER COUNTRIES. THIS IS NO ICELAND. NEITHER ARE THERE PRESSURES ON GOVERNMENT TO PLAY FOR GALLERY OF THIRD WORLD OPINION BY TWISTING GIANT'S TAIL. GCOB, IN OUR ASSESSMENT, COULD NOT AFFORD TO START OUT ITS LIFE AS SOVEREIGN

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NATION BY JEOPARDIZING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH US BY LETTING

NEGOTIATIONS FAIL UNLESS US TOOK CLEARLY UNREASONABLE POSITION, AND WE HAVE ALREADY PASSED POINT WHERE THIS COULD BE ALLEGED. THEY HAVE A GREAT STAKE IN QUALITY OF US-GCOB RELATIONSHIP AND ARE INEVITABLY HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON US IN MANY AREAS. ANYTHING THAT SMACKS OF "KICKING US OUT" WOULD UNDO MANY IMPORTANT BAHAMIAN INTERESTS.

2. GCOB ALSO WELL AWARE OF VALUE IN ECONOMIC TERMS OF CONTINUED US TENURE OF ITS MILITARY FACILITIES. TOTAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE INPUT TO BAHAMIAN ECONOMY FROM US FACILITIES NOT INCONSIDERABLE FOR THIS HARD-PRESSED GOVERNMENT.

3. ACCORDINGLY, WHILE WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THAT GCOB COULD PURSUE AN IRRATIONAL POLICY, WE BASICALLY BELIEVE THAT THEIR INTERESTS ARE AS GREAT -- OR EVEN GREATER -- THAN OURS IN SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME.

4. IN ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES THIS BASIC ASSUMPTION, IF CORRECT, WOULD ARGUE FOR A "HARD" US APPROACH ON ISSUE OF QUID. HOWEVER, US ALSO HAS ITS OWN FUNDAMENTAL INTERESTS INVOLVED, INCLUDING OVER \$1 BILLION US INVESTMENT (LARGER THAN ANY OTHER CARIBBEAN NATION), NUMEROUS AMERICAN RESIDENTS AND VISITORS, AND FUNDAMENTAL INTEREST IN ENSURING A STABLE AND FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT IN THESE STRATEGICALLY SITUATED ISLES. ALL OF THESE COULD BE AFFECTED OVER TIME IF FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS INSENSITIVELY HANDLED.

5. ACCORDINGLY, US ALSO HAS A STAKE IN STARTING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS NEW GOVERNMENT OUT ON RIGHT FOOT. THERE IS A LARGE RESERVOIR OF GENUINE GOOD-WILL FOR U.S. THAT IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO NURTURE. GOVERNMENT IS STILL RELATIVELY SENSITIVE, UNSOPHISTICATED, FEELING ITS WAY. IF OUR APPROACH IS SYMPATHETIC AND HELPFUL IN TONE RATHER THAN THAT OF A "HARD BARGAINER" WE CAN HELP ENDOW THIS GOVERNMENT WITH SELF-CONFIDENCE AS WELL AS TRUST IN U.S. AND ITS INTENTIONS. GCOB FACES MANY DIFFICULTIES IN ECONOMIC AREA AND THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT MANY ON UPPER LEVEL HAVE SOME ILLUSIONS WE SHOULD DEFLATE GENTLY RATHER THAN BRUTALLY ABOUT DEGREE THEY CAN COUNT ON U.S. QUID IN BASE NEGOTIATIONS TO HELP THEM OUT.

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6. WE ALSO ASSUME US HAS REAL INTEREST IN BASIC CAPABILITY OF BAHAMIANS TO HANDLE SURVEILLANCE, NAVIGATION, SECURITY, ETC. NEEDS THAT WERE SUBJECT OF TECHNICAL SURVEY. STRENGTH OF LATTER DOCUMENT WAS THAT IT CONVEYED IMPRESSION OF GENUINE US INTEREST IN GCOB ABILITY TO DO THIS JOB. IF WE HAVE IN FACT A POSITIVE US NATIONAL INTEREST TO SERVE IN ASSISTING THIS NATION TO EQUIP ITSELF TO COPE WITH RESPONSIBILITIES IT CAN NO LONGER RELAY ON U.S. AND UK TO FULFILL, OUR ASSISTANCE

SHOULD NOT BE A GRUDGING, RELUCTANTLY EXTENDED MINIMUM TO GET WHAT WE WANT IN BASE NEGOTIATIONS.

7. TECHNICAL SURVEY REPORT, IN OUR JUDGMENT, PROVIDES A SOUND BASIS FOR PROCEEDING. ALONG WITH IMPRESSION OF DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL IT CARRIED, IT WAS REALISTIC IN ITS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A GRADUAL DIET OF PHASED TRAINING, ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT RATHER THAN STRESSING "GLAMOR" ITEMS THAT WOULD CONSTITUTE TOO RICH A MIXTURE FOR DIGESTIVE SYSTEM OF GCOB.

8. OF COURSE THE BIG QUESTION IS WHO WILL PAY FOR WHAT. ITEMS RECOMMENDED IN TECHNICAL SURVEY COST OUT AT OVER \$23 MILLION (PHASED OVER A 15-YEAR PERIOD) IN 1973 DOLLARS, AND EXCLUDING TRAINING COSTS. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT THIS IS WELL BELOW AMOUNT US WOULD ULTIMATELY BE WILLING TO PAY BEFORE WE WOULD ELECT TO RELOCATE BASES, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT RECOMMEND, BOTH FOR TACTICAL AND SUBSTANTIVE REASONS, THAT WE DO SO. AT THIS POINT WE BELIEVE BEST ULTIMATE OUTCOME WOULD BE ONE IN WHICH TOTAL COSTS ARE BORNE ON BASIS OF APPROXIMATELY 75 PERCENT US, 10-15 PERCENT UK, 15-10 PERCENT GCOB. (WE THINK IT IMPORTANT THAT GCOB DEVOTE SOME OF ITS OWN RESOURCES, STRAPPED AS THEY ARE, TO PROVIDE CAPABILITIES FORESEEN IN SURVEY REPORT.) UNDER THIS FORMULA, US WOULD BE PROVIDING ROUGHLY \$18 MILLION OVER 15-YEAR PERIOD. AS INITIAL POSITION WE WOULD INCLUDE \$7.5 MILLION (\$500,000 ANNUAL BASE RENTAL) ALREADY OFFERED AS PART OF \$18 MILLION, BUT BE PREPARED IN LAST ANALYSIS TO EXCLUDE THIS SO THAT TOTAL US CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE \$25 MILLION OVER 15-YEAR PERIOD, OR SOMETHING OVER \$1-1/2 MILLION PER YEAR (SUBSTANTIALLY UNDER PRICE WE UNDERSTAND DOD WOULD ULTIMATELY BE WILLING TO PAY). AS ADDITIONAL SWEETENER WE COULD OFFER FMS CREDIT FOR PURCHASES OR TRAINING OVER THIS AMOUNT.

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ACTION ARA-10

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P 181335Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4758

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9. OUR ASSESSMENT OF GCOB INTERESTS IN THE SUCCESSFUL OUT-COME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND OF ITS RELATIVE UNSOPHISTICATION MIGHT ALSO ARGUE FOR, OR AT LEAST TEMPT US TOWARD, OPERATING RIGHTS AGREEMENT PROVISIONS WHICH THE GCOB, OR ANY OTHER SOV-EREIGN NATION, WOULD NOT ACCEPT IF THEIR MEANING WERE CLEAR TO IT. IF THE GCOB DOESN'T ASK, AND WE DON'T EXPLAIN, IT SHOULD BE QUITE EASY TO OBTAIN, IN WRITING, RIGHTS TO OPERATE IN BAHAMIAN TERRITORY WHICH ARE EITHER MORE EXTENSIVE THAN WE NEED OR WHICH, EVEN IF THEY ARE NECESSARY TO OUR MUTUAL NATIONAL INTERESTS, MIGHT OTHERWISE BE ACCOMPANIED BY APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARDS OF BAHAMIAN SOVEREIGNTY. THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE, HOWEVER, BETWEEN OBTAINING OUR RIGHTS BY CAPITALIZING ON THE BAHAMIAN LACK OF SOPHISTICATION AND SUCCESSFULLY USING OUR RIGHTS, COUNTING ON A BAHAMIAN ATTACHMENT TO SOVEREIGNTY WHICH IS LESS THAN OURS. IN SPITE OF THE COMPLETE NEWNESS OF THE ENTIRE EMBASSY TEAM, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT AN EQUALLY NEW BAHAMIAN TEAM WILL, IN PRACTICE, INSIST ON RESPECT FOR GCOB SOVEREIGNTY AND THOSE INTRUSIONS ON SOV-EREIGNTY WHICH ESCAPE THE GCOB NEGOTIATORS WILL NOT ESCAPE THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF THIS NATION THE FIRST TIME WE EXERCISE OUR "RIGHTS". THUS, IF NOT ONLY THE AGREEMENT IS TO BE VIABLE WHEN IMPLEMENTED BUT ALSO RELATIONS WITH THE BAHAMIANS ARE TO BE ESTABLISHED ON A BASIS OF CONFIDENCE AND TRUST, WE MUST SEEK ONLY WHAT WE NEED IN TERMS OF OPERATING RIGHTS, AND
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WE MUST DO SO WITH COMPLETE HONESTY AND RESPECT FOR BAHAMIAN SOVEREIGNTY SO THAT WHAT WE ACHIEVE STANDS THE TEST OF USE.

10. WHAT WE WANT TO ENSURE IS WE ARE AT ONE WITH WASHINGTON ON QUESTION OF THE "STYLE" OF OUR NEGOTIATIONS. WE ARE ARGUING FOR A SYMPATHETIC AND FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE, RECOGNIZING THAT FUNDAMENTAL US INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY A GCOB CAPABLE OF HANDLING PROBLEMS THAT WERE SUBJECT OF TECHNICAL SURVEY, AND INSPIRING CONFIDENCE ON PART OF GCOB THAT US IS

TAKING A BASICALLY OUTGOING AND HELPFUL APPROACH IN FORMATIVE STAGE OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. THUS BASE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE TO BE SEEN IN BROADER CONTEXT THAN SIMPLY "WHAT WE NEED TO PAY" TO GET MINIMUM FACILITIES WE NEED FOR "WHAT THE GCOB DOESN'T KNOW IT IS GIVING AWAY" IN OBTAINING ACCOMPANYING OPERATING RIGHTS. IN LAST ANALYSIS WE COULD PROBABLY (ALTHOUGH NOT ASSUREDLY) ACHIEVE THIS BY TAKING A TOUGH POSITION, SINCE GCOB AT THE MOMENT AT LEAST HAS NO PLACE ELSE TO TURN. THE PRICE OF THIS WOULD BE TO LEAVE A BAD TASTE WHICH WOULD AFFECT OTHER US INTERESTS HERE OVER LONG-RUN.

11. WE HAVE MADE THIS MESSAGE STADIS ONLY TO AVOID GENERAL UNCONTROLLED DISTRIBUTION TO OTHER AGENCIES, BUT WOULD SEE VALUE IN ITS PROVISION TO SELECTED INDIVIDUALS IN DEFENSE (E.G. GENERAL WALLACE) WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE THERE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF US POSITION FOR NEGOTIATIONS AS INDICATIONS EMBASSY'S THINKING.
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